



Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, January 24, 2020

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There was a Mobile MPO meeting this week and there is a Public meeting on the Draft 25 year Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) on Wednesday, January 29th 4-6:30 in the SARPC Board Room. Mr. Cooper with ALDOT was at the annual SARPC Conference at Point Clear. See *MPO Updates*. There are some rumblings in Washington about a new Transportation Funding Bill see *Legislative Updates*. A new Mobile River Bridge Project is gaining momentum, and will Amtrak return to the Alabama Coast? see *In the News*.

Check out [ALGO Traffic](#) before you travel!



www.mobilempo.org Check us out on FACEBOOK

SARPC Transportation Video, this is what we do [HERE](#)

Want to know what other SARPC departments do?

- [Planning and Community Development](#)
- [Area Agency on Aging](#)
- [Employment and Economic Development](#)

Anthony Johnson, Monica Williamson, Tom Piper, and Kevin Harrison, PTP

Mobile MPO Updates

There is a Public Meeting concerning the 25 Year Long Range Transportation Plan on January 29th, 4PM-6:30PM in the SARPC Board Room

This week the Mobile MPO Policy Committee met. The Technical Coordinating Committee and Citizen's Advisory Committee (TCC/CAC) [Bylaws](#) and committee composition were amended. If you are a MPO Member, or an agency on the TCC/CAC, please take time to review the [Bylaws](#) and who sits on the committee.

Other items on the agenda of the MPO included a couple of cost increases in the Transportation Improvement Program. The cost increases are for the following projects:

- CN 100049566 Replace Bridge Westbound Over Tensaw –Spanish River from \$ 24,841,688 to \$35,165,857, funded with Federal Bridge Funds,
- CN 100060154 SR 158 Extension Lott Road Overpass and Jug Handle from \$20,000,000 to \$25,161,677 funded with National Highway Funds.

The two ATRIP II awards were added to the TIP:

- CN Phase 1 to Widen AL-158 from 2 Lanes to 4 Lanes from Mile Post 7.75 to Spartan Drive in City of Saraland \$4,741,885.95
- CN Intersection Improvements, Including Adding Roundabout at SR-188 and Irvington Bayou La Batre Highway Target Start Date : 1/1/2020 Engineers Estimate : \$246,923.00 City of Bayou La Batre
- Also on the Agenda was a STP Attributable realignment. Additional lanes on Zeigler Blvd from Forest Hill to Athey has had a recent cost increase from \$17,650,000 to \$20,812,530, leaving the STP Attributable schedule out of balance. Additional lanes on Three Notch Road from Schillinger Road to McDonald Road was moved out from FY 2023 to FY 2024.
- 100052463 (UT) Three Notch Road, Schillinger Rd to McDonald Rd (Additional Lanes) \$449,945
 - Originally scheduled in 2022, now scheduled in 2024
- 100052464 (CN) Three Notch Road, Schillinger Rd to McDonald Rd (Additional Lanes) \$4,499,456
 - Originally scheduled in 2023, now scheduled in 2024
- Projects of the Congestion Management Process 2020-2023
 - Government Street CMP Corridor, FY 2020 \$625,000

- Airport Blvd, Hillcrest Rd to Cody Rd, FY 2021 \$625,000
- University / Old Shell Road Corridor, FY 2022 \$625,000
- Moffett Road Corridor, FY 2023 \$625,000
- There was also a discussion of the possibility to allow CMP projects more than one year \$500,000 (fed) CMP Allocation; specifically Government Street downtown.

There was a discussion on the *Envision 2045*, the 25 year Long Range Transportation Plan. ALL federally funded transportation projects must be derived from this plan. It is updated every five years, and must be fiscally constrained, meaning the federally funding must be identified for the each project in the Plan. Currently, the I-10 Mobile River Bridge is not in the fiscally constrained Plan. There was also a short presentation by Kevin Spriggs with the Common Sense Campaign on a Coastal Alabama Consensus Plan for a four lane Mobile River Bridge and Expressway.

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission Annual Meeting

Last Friday, as part of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission Annual Meeting, Mr. John Cooper the Director of the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) was a featured speaker to the elected officials and distinguished guests of Coastal Alabama. Mr. Cooper spoke of the REBUILD Alabama Act, and spoke of the financial situation the State budget is in. Ninety percent of the DOT's budget is spent on maintenance, and there are great needs across the entire state. It was estimated that there is only \$200 Million for the entire state, for projects that meet one of three categories; Urban Congestion, Over Crowded Two Lane Roads, and Economic Development. The Economic Development projects are predominantly projects for communities that do not have four lane access to our Interstate system.



Several questions were asked that pertained to the I-10 Mobile River Bridge, including possible tolls, scope, and senior discounts. In Mr. Cooper's answer to a question that really pertained to lowest potential toll that could have been, it was noted that if ALDOT had been given the opportunity to continue the bridge project, ALDOT would be in a better position to answer that.

An editorial-

It is plainly clear that the State of Alabama does not have the federal funds available to just outright build the I-10 Mobile River Bridge. There has not been a Federal Gas Tax increase since in 1993. 1993!!!. ALDOT has the same purchasing power as they did in the 1990s. There are a lot of projects in Coastal Alabama that require some Federal Funding from the State. The SR158 Extension to the State Line is only being built as a 2 lane road due to lack of funding, and thank goodness for the BP funds to be able to do that. US 45 and others need attention as well. In Baldwin County, the Eastern Shore MPO has SR181, SR104, US 90 and US 98 on their Visionary list of projects, with no funding. There are A LOT of regional projects that require federal funding from the State that are not being accomplished because there just is not enough federal funding coming to the State. We, regionally, locally, have to be smart in how to proceed with the Bridge and work with ALDOT. ALDOT is doing the best they can, given the situation they have.

What would a base, no frills expressway cost? What does a Toll/Revenue Study project the revenue to be at what toll? Would a TIFIA loan or a PAB even be approved with a free Interstate next to it? Probably not if it was me lending the money. What needs to be done to fix that? What we don't need to do is send ALDOT unrealistic expectations, and expect results. We, the region, need to work with ALDOT, on realistic solutions.

Mobile MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Meeting

The Mobile MPO BPAC met last week to discuss bicycle and pedestrian issues throughout Mobile County. The agenda included the election of Chair and Vice-Chair – Mr. John Blanton was elected Chairman and Ms. Carol Hunter was elected Vice-Chairwoman. We would like to thank these kind folks for their continued guidance and support.

There was an update on the Bike/Ped section of the MPO's 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan and a review of upcoming road projects for inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. There was also a brief discussion on acquiring recent crash data involving cyclists and pedestrians. There was also an update on the Coastal Alabama Livable Communities Coalition's Bicycle Safety Training for Law Enforcement Officers.

MOBILE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM FEASIBILITY STUDY is underway



In August of 2019, a consultant selection committee selected VIA Mobility to perform the study. VIA Mobility has partnered with local group Goodwin, Mills, and Cawood as a sub consultant. [HERE](#) is Via's presentation from the kick-off.

There is a lot of work to be done in a short amount of time. This week, the consultants were meeting with some of the stakeholders. Please call Kevin Harrison for details.



Envision2045

Invest in your transportation Future

Mobile, AL Metropolitan Area Long Range Transportation Plan

<https://www.envision2045.org/public-involvement.html>

Envision2045 is multi-modal in scope, encompassing long-range plans for highway, public transportation, and bicycle and pedestrian networks. Regional growth, economic development, and accessibility within the study area along with environmental concerns necessitate that the long-range plan addresses not only improved vehicular travel but also improvements to alternative modes. Preservation of the existing transportation system coupled with enhancement of all modal choices will contribute to the improvement of the overall quality of life in the region.

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission(SARPC) invites decision makers, stakeholders, and members of the general public to participate in the development of the plan. SARPC is seeking feedback on transportation major infrastructure projects, initiatives and policies. Transportation priorities such as congestion, freight, transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian, and other transportation modes will be addressed in the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan. There will be a public meeting on the Draft Plan on January 29th in the SARPC Board from 4:00- 6:30.

Your comments help SARPC's planners to develop a wide-ranging, action-oriented transportation plan. The Envision2045 plan being developed will also serve as a basis for allocating limited federal money aimed at roadways, bridges, and public transportation facilities. The comment period on the early participation online survey is closed; however, there will be several more opportunities for the public to comment on the plan in the near future.

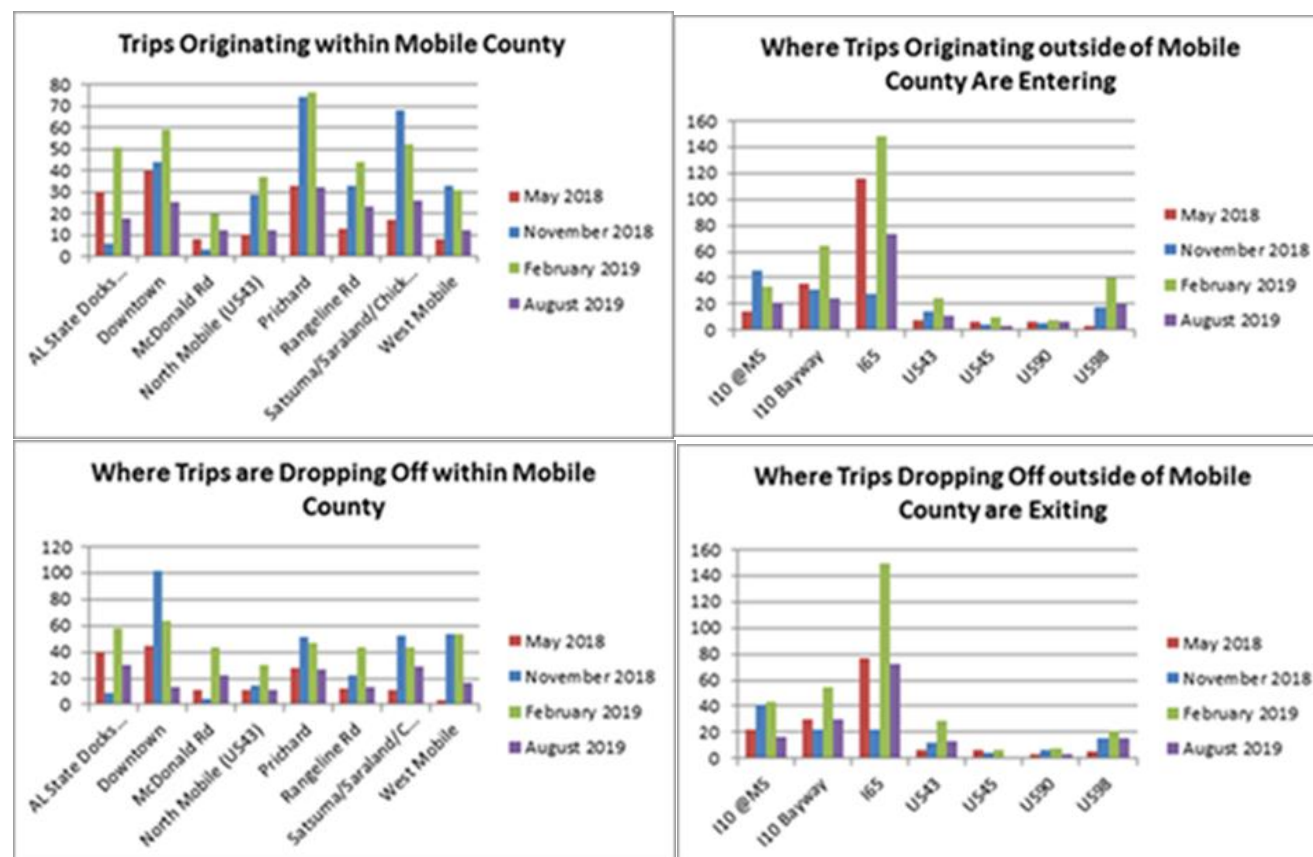
Please contact Kevin Harrison at kharrison@sarpc.org with any questions or requests for further information.

Results from the Survey conducted online from September 2019 to October 2019 can be found in the following document: Mobile Urban Area 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan Survey Report.

Click [HERE](#) for Full Results.

FREIGHT DATA

APM Terminals has provided us with their fourth quarterly survey report. Just as last quarter, for two days APM Terminals had on-board tablets for drivers to answer a series of questions in terms of where they came from and where they are going. APM Terminals will continue to gather this information quarterly for our benefit of validating truck data for the travel demand forecasting model.



[FY 2020-2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \(TIP\) NOW ONLINE](#)

The TIP represents a four year program (2020-2023) for improvements in the various transportation systems located within the Mobile study area as identified in the Mobile MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the twenty-five year plan for the Mobile Urban area [Destination 2040](#). The LRTP establishes the transportation programs that are needed to meet travel demand by the study year and study area. LRTP projects that become funded are moved into the TIP and submitted to the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), where they are programmed into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). For MPO projects, TIP project selection is based on priorities established by MPO member governments and the availability of funds through the Surface Transportation Attributable program. For other projects, ALDOT has discretion of project funding based on availability of funds from various types of funding categories. Most often, projects in the TIP are derived from the LRTP. The TIP guides ALDOT in its annual allocation of funds for transportation improvements and becomes a part of the STIP.

ArcGIS Online is now being utilized by MPO staff to map all federally funded surface transportation projects within our area. Check it out [HERE](#).

Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project:

<http://mobileriverbridge.com/>

About the project:

The Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project would reduce congestion on I-10 in South Alabama through the addition of additional capacity: a new six-lane bridge over the Mobile River, full replacement of the existing Bayway with an eight-lane structure, and redevelopment of seven interchanges. The project would run from Virginia Street in Mobile to the US 90/98 interchange in Baldwin County. Information in the project is available at www.MobileRiverBridge.com.

On August 28, 2019 the Alabama Department of Transportation ceased project development efforts on the proposed Mobile River Bridge & Bayway.

Recent Scheduling Changes This Week for Mobile

The target start date, plan status, or project engineers estimated amount has changed for the following:

Project : 100069170 (CN)

Federal aid number : IM I065 (508)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : RESURFACING ON I-65 FROM I-10 TO MAIN STREET Old Target start date : April 03, 2020 New Target start date : April 24, 2020

Project : 100069442 (CN)

Federal aid number : NH 0042 (538)

County : MOBILE

Project Description : INSTALLATION OF NEW GENERATOR TO REPLACE EXISTING GENERATOR FOR BANKHEAD TUNNEL AND ITS DEVICES

Old Engineers Estimate : \$1,097,001.00 New Engineers Estimate : \$1,187,250.00

South Alabama RPO Updates

Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan Update

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) is updating the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan which details which projects are eligible for Federal Transit Administration dollars for Elderly and Disabled (5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute projects (5316) or those transit projects that go above and beyond the requirements of ADA (5317).

If you are interested in, utilize, or provide transit, or would like to apply for federal transit dollars for special needs transit services your organization needs to be involved in this process.

SARPC staff will be holding public meetings to explain the plan, solicit input, and review the FTA 5310 application process in the coming weeks.

If you would like to comment on the plan or have any questions please contact the Transportation Planning Department at SARPC at 251-433-6541.

Projects in Region Let January 31st, 2020

MOBILE COUNTY

- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, Guardrail Installation, and Traffic Stripe on SR-193 from the intersection of SR-163 to the junction of Higgins Road in Cypress Shores. Length 3.699 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$1,897,956 to \$2,319,724 .
- For constructing the Planing, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-188 from the junction of Franklin Road north of Grand Bay to the junction of Lakeland Drive. Length 4.011 mi. The Bracket Estimate on this project is from \$737,958 to \$901,948 .

BALDWIN COUNTY

None at this time

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

None at this time

[What's Under Construction?](#) [Project Status](#)

Legislative Updates

Congress is in session.

Key House committee chairman to meet with Mnuchin on infrastructure next week

BY [CRISTINA MARCOS](#) - 01/22/20

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman [Richard Neal](#) (D-Mass.) said he plans to meet with Treasury Secretary [Steven Mnuchin](#) next week in the hopes of rekindling an infrastructure funding deal with the Trump administration, despite the tensions flaring across the Capitol in the impeachment trial.

Neal told reporters in Massachusetts Tuesday night that he and Mnuchin agreed to discuss a bipartisan infrastructure bill following the recent deal on the revised U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade pact that [President Trump](#) is expected to sign into law in the coming days.

"We need to agree on some numbers and proceed on the basis that the country badly needs it, and I think that it is doable," Neal said, [according to the State House News Service](#).

Attempts by Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#) (D-Calif.) and Senate Minority Leader [Charles Schumer](#) (D-N.Y.) to broker infrastructure legislation with Trump last year collapsed when the president walked out of a meeting. Trump had taken offense at Pelosi accusing him of being "engaged in a cover-up" and [said he wouldn't work with Democrats](#) while they are investigating him.

But Neal maintained that there is incentive on both sides to work out a deal, even in an election year.

"I think big things can get done in election years," Neal said. "This is one of those issues that's interesting because the president needs it and we want it."

Pelosi said at a press conference last Thursday that Democrats plan to roll out infrastructure legislation next week when the House returns from recess.

"It is something we talked about during the campaign. It is something that the president talked about as a priority during the campaign. We thought we would be able to move in a positive way on this," Pelosi said.

"So far, they have not come on board. However, we've decided now we'll just have to go forward, and we do believe that now, with the passage of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, that they might be interested in cooperating in other ways," Pelosi added.

A spokeswoman for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which has been taking the lead on a legislative framework, said there is no bill text yet but that there may be more details next week.

Before Trump and Democratic leaders ended their talks last spring, they had [agreed to pursue](#) a \$2 trillion infrastructure package. But it was unclear how they would agree on ways to pay for the infrastructure investments.

Still, the timing of discussing an infrastructure plan next week would come as the Senate is in the middle of the trial considering the two articles of impeachment against Trump over his dealings with Ukraine.

Tensions already [began flaring Tuesday](#) when the Senate considered a resolution establishing the rules for the impeachment trial, which passed around 2 a.m.

At one point late into the night, Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts issued a rare admonishment to the House impeachment managers and Trump's defense team following a harsh exchange over an amendment seeking to subpoena former White House national security adviser [John Bolton](#).

Public-Private Partnerships for Transportation and Water Infrastructure

January 21, 2020

Report

Congressional Budget Office (CBO) assesses whether public-private partnerships have resulted in projects being built more quickly or at a lower cost for taxpayers. CBO also examines whether partnerships that include private financing sped up project financing.

Federal, state, and local governments spent \$441 billion on transportation and water infrastructure in fiscal year 2017, and there is widespread demand for greater investment. All levels of government face calls to improve highways and other transportation systems and to make drinking water and wastewater systems safer and less expensive for users. Some analysts have suggested that public-private partnerships might contribute to those improvements by providing private parties with incentives to complete projects more efficiently—in less time or at lower cost. Other observers have noted that public-private partnerships that include private financing could contribute to the financial resources used for transportation and water infrastructure. Such partnerships, however, impose costs on the federal government when they draw on federally supported financing.

This CBO report explains the differences between the use of public-private partnerships for transportation and those for water infrastructure. It determines whether partnerships without financing build projects more quickly or less expensively for taxpayers. Finally, it assesses whether partnerships that included private financing sped up the financing process.

[...read more](#)

Trump Administration Releases “Ensuring American Leadership in Automated Vehicle Technologies: Automated Vehicles 4.0”

Updated: Wednesday, January 8, 2020

WASHINGTON – The White House and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) released ‘*Ensuring American Leadership in Automated Vehicle Technologies: Automated Vehicles 4.0*’ (AV 4.0). The initiative was announced by U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao in a keynote speech at CES in Las Vegas. AV 4.0 unifies efforts in automated vehicles across 38 Federal departments, independent agencies, commissions, and Executive Offices of The President, providing high-level guidance to state and local governments, innovators, and all stakeholders on the U.S. government’s approach towards AVs.

“AV 4.0 will ensure American leadership in AV technology development and integration by providing unified guidance for the first time across the Federal government for innovators and stakeholders,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

AV 4.0 establishes federal principles for the development and integration of automated vehicles, consisting of three core focus areas: prioritize safety and security, promote innovation, and ensure a consistent regulatory approach. It also outlines ongoing Administration efforts supporting AV technology growth and leadership, as well as opportunities for collaboration including federal investments in the AV sector and resources for innovators, researchers, and the public.

“AV 4.0 brings all of the important work happening on automated vehicle technologies across the federal government under one unified approach. The federal principles released today help foster an environment for innovators to advance safe AV technologies, and put the U.S. in a position of continued leadership in the future of transportation,” said U.S. Chief Technology Officer Michael Kratsios.

The USDOT is actively preparing for emerging technologies by engaging with new technologies to address legitimate public concerns about safety, security, and privacy without hampering innovation. With the release of *Automated Driving Systems 2.0: A Vision for Safety* (ADS 2.0) in September 2017, the USDOT provided voluntary guidance to industry, as well as technical assistance and best practices to states, offering a path forward for the safe testing and integration of Automated Driving Systems. In October 2018, *Preparing for the Future of Transportation: Automated Vehicles 3.0* (AV 3.0) introduced guiding principles for AV innovation for all surface transportation modes, and described the USDOT’s strategy to address existing barriers to potential safety benefits and progress.

AV 4.0 builds on these efforts by presenting a unifying posture to inform collaborative efforts in automated vehicles for all stakeholders and outlines past and current Federal Government efforts to ensure the United States leads the world in AV technology development and integration while prioritizing safety, security, and privacy and safeguarding the freedoms enjoyed by Americans.

AV 4.0 will be published in the Federal Register for public review and comment. More information on the USDOT’s work on automated vehicles can be found at <https://www.transportation.gov/av/4>.

Chair DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, joined by 36 Members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Question FCC Plans that Undermine the Development and Deployment of Safety Critical Technology

January 22, 2020

Washington, D.C. — Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Ranking Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Sam Graves (R-MO), and 36 Members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure sent a letter to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to raise serious concerns with the FCC’s plan to redirect more than half the 5.9 GHz spectrum band.

In December, the FCC proposed to reallocate more than half of the 5.9 GHz radio frequency band (or Safety Band) to unlicensed operations, such as Wi-Fi. The FCC disregarded the Secretary of Transportation (DOT) Elaine Chao’s letter to Chairman Pai, which stated, “DOT has significant concerns with the Commission’s proposal, which represents a major shift in the FCC’s regulation of the 5.9 GHz Band and jeopardizes the significant transportation safety benefits that the allocation of this Band was meant to foster.” In today’s letter, Members are asking the FCC to reconsider their plan.

“The FCC’s proposal undercuts the potential to prevent many of the 37,000 traffic fatalities each year by impeding the development and deployment of safety-critical technologies,” **the Members wrote in their letter to the FCC.**

To read the full letter, click [here](#).

Transportation Secretary Chao highlights series of rural-focused mobility initiatives

BY [CHRIS GALFORD](#) | JANUARY 24, 2020

Noting the major role rural roads and highways play in trucking, freight, and driving despite hosting less than one-fifth of the U.S. population, U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao announced ongoing rural investments Wednesday.

Springing off of the World Economic Forum, Chao pointed out that in the United States, as in many countries, rural transportation networks are vital to economic growth and opportunity, but face major disparities. In the United States, 69 percent of highway lanes run through rural areas, and two-thirds of all U.S. rail freight originates from such areas. Nearly half of all truck miles carry them across rural roads — as well as bear 72 percent of large truck occupant deaths. Roughly half of all highway fatalities occur on rural roads.

“This is of special concern because safety is the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Number One priority,” Chao wrote. “So it’s vitally important not only to growth and competitiveness but to safety, that the transportation and infrastructure needs of rural communities be addressed.”

Of particular note in that effort are the Rural Project Initiative and the Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES) initiative. While the Rural Project Initiative is still being implemented, its goal is the sponsorship of more rural infrastructure projects in the form of greater access to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (USDOT) major loan program. On the other hand, ROUTES works with rural communities to improve data sharing and analysis, as well as access federal transportation grant funding and loan programs. Overseen by a ROUTES Council, the program is meant to rebalance USDOT discretionary grants and better address important transportation needs.

While the USDOT already puts around \$70 billion into infrastructure needs annually, Chao noted that efforts are being made to increase the rural share of that haul. Since 2016, the rural share of discretionary funds has nearly doubled across nine transportation programs, and awards given to rural projects more than tripled.

“Addressing rural-urban transportation disparities will help ensure a more inclusive transportation network for the future,” Chao said. “That’s a goal that all countries can and should incorporate into their national transportation plans.”

Funding Opportunities

Infrastructure For Rebuilding America

U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao Announces Availability of More Than \$900 Million for Infrastructure Investments Across America

WASHINGTON – U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Elaine L. Chao today announced the latest round of the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant program, which is making available more than \$900 million for American infrastructure investments. The INFRA program is expected to award \$906 million to significant projects that support the Administration’s focus on infrastructure improvements as outlined in the NOFO.

“The Department will invest more than \$900 million in major projects that will improve transportation infrastructure, economic productivity, and quality of life across our nation,” said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao.

INFRA advances a grant program established in the FAST Act of 2015 to help rebuild America’s aging infrastructure. INFRA utilizes selection criteria that promote projects with national and regional economic vitality goals while leveraging non-federal funding to increase the total investment by state, local, and private partners. The program also incentivizes project sponsors to pursue innovative strategies, including public-private partnerships. INFRA promotes the incorporation of innovative technology, such as broadband deployment and intelligent transportation systems, that will improve our transportation system. INFRA will also hold recipients accountable for their performance in project delivery and operations.

The Department will make awards under the INFRA program to large and small projects. For a large project, the INFRA grant must be at least \$25 million. For a small project, the grant must be at least \$5 million. For each fiscal year of INFRA funds, 10 percent of available funds are reserved for small projects.

The Department will award at least 25 percent of INFRA grant funding to rural projects, which often play a vital role in supporting our national economic vitality. Addressing the deteriorating conditions and elevated fatality rates on our rural transportation infrastructure is a key objective of the Department. For rural communities in need of funding for highway and multimodal freight projects with national or regional economic significance, INFRA is an opportunity to apply directly for financial assistance from the federal government.

INFRA grants may be used to fund a variety of components of an infrastructure project, however, the Department is specifically focused on projects in which the local sponsor is significantly invested and is positioned to proceed rapidly to construction. Eligible INFRA project costs may include: reconstruction, rehabilitation, acquisition of property (including land related to the project and improvements to the land), environmental mitigation, construction contingencies, equipment acquisition, and operational improvements directly related to system performance.

The NOFO application period will remain open through February 25, 2020. For more information, visit: www.transportation.gov/INFRA.

Updated: Monday, January 13, 2020

Opportunity Zones

EDA's Opportunity Zone Web Page

EDA now has an [EDA Opportunity Zone Web page](#) for economic development stakeholders and others to use as a resource to further help foster job creation and attract private investment to support development in economically distressed areas across the United States.

[Section 5307, 5310, and 5311: Using Non-DOT Funds for Local Match](#)

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [Administration for Community Living](#) (ACL) has worked with the [National Aging and Disability Transportation Center](#) to clarify the ability of grantees to use Older Americans Act Title IIIB Supportive Services Funds to match Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs. These FTA programs include Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307), Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and People with Disabilities (Section 5310), and Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311). This information has been publicized [HERE](#)

To stay up to date on all of the many grants that are available visit www.grants.gov.

Just For Fun (THIS IS SATIRE, AND JUST FOR FUN)

With the kickoff of the 2020 U.S. Census getting started in Alaska this week we thought it would be interesting to look at the history of the US Census

INFOGRAPHIC

History Of The U.S. Census

The U.S. Census, which is conducted every 10 years, will be conducted in 2020, and the process of documenting American citizens is not without its share of historical issues and controversies. let's take a look at important moments in the history of the U.S. census.

1790:

First census taken by show of hands.

1840:

With the census falling on a day many Americans were vacationing out of the country, U.S. population recorded as 95.

1870:

American Indians first enumerated in census after centuries-long effort to get population down to manageable number.

1880:

Federal marshals who previously collected census data replaced by professional enumerators who knew thousands of additional numbers.

1930:

Census Bureau begins asking questions about unemployment, prompting officials to receive record number of business ideas that just need little investment boost to really take off.

1940:

Second gender option added.

1970:

After heavy pressure from constituent groups, Census officially stops counting individuals over 6'4" as two people.

1990:

First census to ask respondents their biggest turn-ons and turn-offs.

2010:

Bilingual questionnaires introduced in effort to increase rate of return by Hispanic and overachieving households.

In the News

Alabama transportation officials react to planning group endorsing new bridge project

[Steve Alexander](#) Updated Jan 22, 2020

A spokesperson for the Alabama Department of Transportation has now issued a statement in reaction to the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization officially endorsing a new bridge project to connect Mobile and Baldwin Counties.

Tony Harris said, "The Department of Transportation was unaware that the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization would introduce a resolution today regarding the Mobile River Bridge.

We plan to comment further after a thorough review of the resolution."

The move came at a planning organization meeting Wednesday morning in Daphne.

This proposal, for now, is called the Mobile River Bridge and Expressway Concept.

It would have four lanes and two travel lanes in each direction from I-10 and the Virginia Street exit to Daphne. The estimated cost would be \$1.2 billion.

But the big question for many people: will it have tolls?

MPO Chairman Dane Haygood said, "We're hopeful it can be done without a toll."

Haygood said this is an expressway plan and that "we were approached with an option that said, we believe that an expressway can be built without a toll, alright, and, so, you certainly want to give those individuals and those ideas an opportunity to be explored."

Haygood did not mention who approached planning officials with the option.

He said, next, it's important to reach a consensus with the Metropolitan Planning Organization, or MPO, in Mobile before state transportation officials agree to sponsor a project.

Haygood said, "I think we've got to come together in coastal Alabama, Mobile and Baldwin Counties, the two MPO's, and agree and, once we do that, I think we can have a chance of success with Montgomery."

Some people at the meeting had comments and questions about the proposal.

State Auditor Jim Zeigler said, "A \$1.2 billion dollar bridge plan is light years better than the plan a original."

Lou Campomenosi said, "What we've done is we've accepted Governor Ivey's challenge for the locals to do the work that Montgomery should have done to begin with."

Another man asked, "Are bicycle lanes and pedestrian lanes still included in bridge construction? If yes, how much does that add to the total cost?"

Mobile's Metropolitan Planning Organization heard a presentation on the plan Wednesday morning at its meeting but didn't take a vote.

The body is now discussing the plan itself.

The same group last August voted to remove the project from its Transportation Improvement Plan, or TIP -- a move that effectively stopped the effort from going forward as controversy raged over proposed tolls.

As States Add Money to Fix Roads, U.S. Is Urged to Ante Up

States' voters approved \$7.7 billion in transportation spending last year, but the federal government needs to do more to fix the nation's ragged roadways, highway and engineering experts say.

By Benjamin Preston Jan. 23, 2020

Drivers in America topped [3.2 trillion miles in 2018](#), traveling countless roads and bridges in dire need of repair and improvement, and they are showing little sign of slowing down.

The American Society of Civil Engineers painted a bleak picture of the country's byways in its [Infrastructure Report Card](#) in the spring of 2017, the most recent of its every-four-years editions. The organization's assessment resulted in an overall D-plus grade. The nation's roads earned an underwhelming D, while bridges slid by with a C-plus. In all, 45 percent of the nation's roads were deemed in poor condition.

Since then, the group estimates that vehicle travel has increased 17 percent alongside an unequal 5 percent increase in new roadways. The result has been 6.9 billion hours a year of traffic delays, which cost American motorists roughly \$616 each in 2017, the last year tracked.

"You have a lot more cars, but not much more new roadway," Andrew Herrmann, a former president of the society, said in an interview. "We're falling behind due to the poor condition of the nation's highways."

Federal spending on road infrastructure is struggling to keep up; federal lawmakers [staved off a cut](#) to the national Highway Trust Fund last year that would have pulled \$7.6 billion away from state highway budgets. This has left the states to fill in some of the gaps, and voters around the country last year approved huge transportation investments via [ballot measures](#).

"The ballot results are a great reminder infrastructure investment remains one of the few areas where red states, blue states, Republicans and Democrats can all come together," Dave Bauer, president of the American Road & Transportation Builders Association, said in a statement. "It should also demonstrate to lawmakers on Capitol Hill that the public will be on board for the passage of a long-term bill that significantly boosts highway and transit investment at the federal level." Click [HERE](#) to read the rest of the article.

Mobile holds the key to funding for Amtrak renewal on Gulf Coast

January 23, 2020 4:40 AM

By: [Associated Press](#)

MOBILE, Ala. (AP) — Leaders in Alabama's port city of Mobile are dimming chances for reviving passenger train service along the northern Gulf Coast.

Members of the City Council's finance committee withheld support for funding service through Alabama's port city during a meeting Tuesday.

Al.com [reported](#) the full council could vote on the issue next week.

Amtrak hasn't operated along the coast since Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The Southern Rail Commission supports restarting passenger trains between Mobile and New Orleans with stops in Mississippi.

Louisiana and Mississippi have approved funding to restart the trains, but Alabama hasn't. Officials at the Alabama State Port say passenger trains could disrupt freight service through the port, and city leaders including Mayor Sandy Stimpson have expressed concerns.

"There is a lot that needs to be explained before I can support it," said council member Joel Daves, chairman of the finance committee.

Mobile is being asked to commit as much as \$3 million over three years to pay for Amtrak service starting in 2023, when Amtrak service is expected to resume.

The city commitment doesn't include potential capital costs to upgrade the existing rail line. An additional \$2.2 million is needed from an Alabama-based source to finance those improvements, but Gov. Kay Ivey isn't backing the project.

Mississippi has dedicated \$15 million, Louisiana has approved \$10 million and Amtrak has set aside \$6 million toward capital improvements along the rail line. The project faces a deadline of Feb. 5 for getting local funding to match federal funding.

FEDERAL TRUST FUNDS AND OTHER DEDICATED FUNDS:

Fiscal Sustainability Is a Growing Concern for Some Key Funds

GAO-20-156: Published: Jan 16, 2020. Publicly Released: Jan 23, 2020.

Every major federal department has at least 2 trust funds or dedicated funds that pay for key programs. The money comes from related taxes, fees, and premiums—e.g., U.S. postage stamp revenue goes to the Postal Service Fund.

The overall federal trust fund balance is expected to start declining in 2022 as balances in the Medicare and Social Security trust funds drop. The government is projected to borrow the difference—which isn't sustainable.

Of our 13 case study funds, 11 received general revenue in addition to dedicated revenue. For example, the 2015 Highway Trust Fund reauthorization provided \$70 billion in general revenue to the fund. To continue reading click [HERE](#).

[New FEMA Policy Requiring Communities to Build Stronger](#)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released a new [policy](#) requiring communities using federal disaster aid to rebuild public facilities to follow new construction codes to make them more resilient to future calamity. The policy requires states and municipalities that rebuild with FEMA money to take preventative steps such as locating rebuilt public facilities outside flood zones, building a safe distance from wildfire-prone vegetation, and using durable building materials. It will also alter how communities spend the tens of billions of dollars FEMA distributes each year to states that sustain a major disaster and qualify for federal aid. The policy applies only to FEMA grants spent on rebuilding public facilities. It does not affect FEMA's cash payments to individuals and families in disaster zones.

Transportation Research

INFORMATION: INFRA 2020 NOFO Posted - Informational Webinars

The Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST) has announced the FY 2020 round of the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant program. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) has been posted on the Build America Bureau website and will be published in the Federal Register later this week. Additional information on how to apply, frequently asked questions, and the Department's Benefit Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Grant programs can be found on the following website at <https://www.transportation.gov/INFRA>. The deadline for applications is February 25, 2020 at 11:59pm EST.

OST will be hosting two informational webinars for prospective grant applicants next week as follows:

-INFRA 2020 How to Apply Webinar: Tuesday, January 21, 2020, 3:00-4:30pm EST.

Registration link: https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/ek9ib106z4pp/event/event_info.html

-INFRA 2020 Benefit Cost Analysis Webinar: Thursday, January 23, 2020, 3:00-4:30pm EST.

Registration link: https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/eggk5crn9y4p/event/event_info.html

Here are some talking points you may find useful when talking to groups or prospective applicants:

FY 2020 INFRA Program

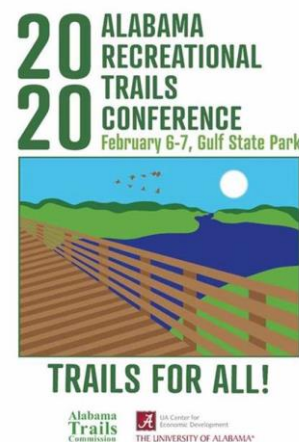
- The Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) program provides Federal financial assistance to highway and freight projects of national or regional significance. The Department is soliciting applications for awards under the program's fiscal year (FY) 2020 funding.
- The Department estimates that **\$906 million will be available for award**.
- The Application Deadline is **February 25, 2020**. The Department expects to make selections in June 2020.
- The FY 2020 INFRA competition focuses on the same four themes advanced in earlier INFRA rounds:
 - Supporting Economic Vitality at the national and regional level;
 - Leveraging Federal Funding to attract non-federal sources of infrastructure investment;
 - Deploying innovative technology, encouraging innovative approaches to project delivery, and incentivizing the use of innovative financing;
 - Holding grant recipients accountable for their performance.
- **New this year:** The Department added, as a factor in the economic vitality evaluation, whether the project primarily serves freight and goods movement.
- **Also New:** Consistent with the ROUTES Initiative, the Department will consider how projects address transportation challenges in rural areas.
- Across its history, this program has awarded \$3.2 billion in grant funding in support of \$16.2 billion in transportation infrastructure investment.
- Additional information about the FY 2020 INFRA grant program can be found at <https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/infragrants>

Please contact Caitlin Hughes if you have any questions.

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2020 Alabama Recreational Trails Conference



Gulf State Park Lodge, Gulf Shores, AL
Conference: Feb. 6-7 - \$195 Registration
Outdoor Mobile Workshops: Feb. 5 - \$50 Registration
Registration Extended to: Monday, Jan. 27, 2020

A fun and informative gathering for those who plan, develop
and manage recreational trails in Alabama.

Wednesday, Feb. 5 - Outdoor Mobile Workshops (10 a.m.-3 p.m.)

Gulf State Park Trails Bicycle Tour

Bicycle along several miles of GSP's 28 miles of new and highly innovative multi-use trails and learn how they were planned and developed under the Gulf State Park Enhancement Project to enhance visitor experience to this remarkable coastal state park. Bicycles provided by Orange Beach. Cycling experience is required. **You are required to bring your own helmet to participate.**

Limited to 15 participants. \$50 Registration

Orange Beach Canoe Trail Tour

Kayaking tour of several sections of the 15 mile-long Orange Beach Canoe Trail, exploring the coves, bayous, and islands around the Orange Beach Peninsula. Learn about the trail's creation and the infrastructure (12 launch sites) and public information system that make it a popular destination for paddlers. Kayaks, paddles, and personal flotation devices provided. **Wear wet-weather gear to keep you dry and shoes that can get wet.**

Limited to 12 participants. \$50 Registration

Explore the Hugh Branyon Backcountry Trail & Bon Secour NWR by Bike and by Foot

Bicycle 7 miles through Gulf State Park and out the Fort Morgan Peninsula to the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge along the wonderful multi-use paths of the Hugh Branyon Backcountry Trail, and then explore the nature paths through the Refuge by foot. You'll experience beautiful protected natural areas of Alabama's Gulf Coast and view the unique plants, birds, and other animals that call this region home while learning how public agencies created and manage these trails. Bicycles provided by Orange Beach. Cycling experience required. **You are required to bring your own helmet to participate.**

Limited to 12 participants. \$50 Registration

Thursday, Feb. 6, and Friday, Feb. 7 - Trails Conference - \$195 Registration Fee
Check in begins 7:30 AM on Thursday, Feb. 6, conference concludes on Friday, Feb. 7 at 11:30 PM

This conference is intended for recreational trail operators and user groups and will highlight case studies demonstrating best practices in recreational trail project planning, management, construction, and maintenance.



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Alabama Transportation Assistance Program * 202 Ramsay Hall Auburn AL 36849 * (800) 446-0382

USDOT Seeking Insight For National Freight Strategic Plan

editor@aaashto.org January 3, 2020

The U.S. Department of Transportation issued a [request for information](#) on December 27 to help develop a National Freight Strategic Plan or NFSP that includes 11 “statutorily required components” mandated by the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation or FAST Act to address the needs of multimodal freight transportation.

“The safe and efficient movement of freight is vital to the Nation’s economic growth and to the creation of well-paying jobs for millions of Americans,” the agency said in its request. “The department seeks information from the public, including stakeholders – state and local agencies, private owners and operators, industry trade groups, shippers and beneficial cargo owners – to aid development of the NFSP.”

The USDOT noted that a national freight strategy “will be helpful” in terms of infrastructure planning as it estimates that freight tonnage will increase by 44 percent between 2015 and 2045, placing increased strain on a system that moves approximately 18 billion tons of freight annually across the country via all modes of transportation.

The agency added that key aspects of this NFSP include: an assessment of the condition and performance of the national multimodal freight network; freight volume forecasts over five, 10, and 20-year periods; identification of major freight gateways and as well as bottlenecks; an assessment of statutory, regulatory, technological, institutional, financial, and other barriers to improved freight transportation performance; a process for improving collaboration on multistate projects.

The Department of Transportation has identified transportation assets that fall within Opportunity Zones with the goal of driving investment of all types to these important areas.

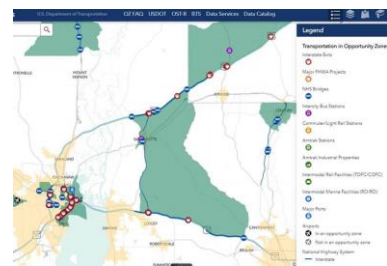
Despite the growing national economy, economically distressed communities are located in every corner of the United States and its territories. These communities have high levels of poverty, failing schools, job scarcity, and a lack of investment. A new tax incentive—Opportunity Zones—was created to spur economic development and job creation by encouraging long-term investment in low-income communities nationwide.

Read about our partner’s roles in Opportunity Zones:

- [Housing and Urban Development: Implementation Plan for The White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council](#)
- [The IRS: Tax reform creates opportunity zone tax incentive](#)
- [Treasury Department Community Development Financial Institutions Fund](#)

The Opportunity Zone designation encourages investment in communities by granting investors extensive Federal tax advantages for using their capital gains to finance new projects and enterprises. There are more than [8,700 designated Qualified Opportunity Zones located in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and five United States territories](#). Of the Qualified Opportunity Zones 40 percent are in rural census tracts, 38 percent are in urban tracts, and 22 percent are in suburban tracts.

South Alabama Opportunity Zones



<https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/subdoc/906/build-fact-sheet2019.pdf>

Transportation Dictionary

The USDOT released a searchable online dictionary that includes over 9,000 transportation terms and acronyms. The terms were collected from a variety of public and private transportation publications and databases. This dictionary presents over 9,000 terms and acronyms related to transportation. The terms and acronyms were obtained from various transportation publications and databases which exist within the federal government, private organizations, Canada and Mexico.

Search Tips

- Sources are listed in parenthesis after the definition.
- None of the searches are case sensitive. Searching for PEDESTRIAN will produce the same results as searching for pedestrian.
- The Dictionary searches for the word, phrase or acronym as it is entered and returns all records that match or contain that word, phrase or acronym. For example, searching for pedestrian will return records for pedestrian and pedestrian walkway.

Click [HERE](#) for the search engine.
